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TODAY'S FREE SHOWS

4 p.m. Le Dixieband (Alcan Stage)
4:45 p.m. Manouche (Best Buy - CBC Stage)
5:15 p.m. La parade de la Louisiane
6 p.m. Manouche (Best Buy - CBC Stage)
6:30 p.m. Roland Tchakounté (Carrefour General Motors): Cameroon/Paris bluesman wows the Euros – and Chicago.
7 p.m. Jack Semple (Loto-Québec Stage): Saskatchewan blues singer worships in the church of B.B King.
7 p.m. Camp de Blues (Club Jazz TD Canada Trust): Kids from the Camp show off chops.
7:30 p.m. Mahmoud Ahmed (Bell Stage): A major appearance by the Ethiopian legend, fusing rhythm and trance.
8 p.m. Elizabeth Shepherd Trio (Alcan Stage): McGill nu-jazz grad was Juno nominee.
8 p.m. Papa Groove (Samsung Stage): Eleven-piece Montreal Afro-funk band features five-piece brass section.
8 p.m. Jim Weider with special guest Mitch Stein (MMMIS Tent): Telecaster master played with the Band in the '80s.
9 p.m. Rachid Taha (General Motors Stage): Franco-Algerian rock 'n' rai star is practically a Montreal institution, and the right choice to close the fest with a mega-bash.
9 p.m. Antony Gomes (Loto-Québec Stage): Canuck Strat-burner likes his blues funky.
10 p.m. Papa Groove (Samsung Stage): See 8 p.m.
10 p.m. Telmary (Bell Stage): Newly minted Torontonian is queen of Cuban hip hop.
11 p.m. Sylvain Provost (Best Buy - CBC Stage): Inventive local guitarist.
11 p.m. Antony Gomes (Loto-Québec Stage): See 9 p.m.

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL
Mahmoud Ahmed: African star.

TODAY'S PICKS

7:30 p.m. Mahmoud Ahmed (Bell Stage): Africa is a star at this fest, and none is bigger than Ahmed, the Ethiopian Afro-pop legend who went from shining shoes to immortality.
9 p.m. Rachid Taha (General Motors Stage): They love him like Manu Chao here, and there's no doubting this Algerian rebel will fire up the street with his Arabic roots pop, rock and electro the way he did Metropolis.
MARK LEPAGE

DISC OF THE DAY

Elizabeth Shepherd

Besides
Do Right!

This Toronto vocalist, pianist and one-time Montreal resident brings the cool back to jazz song. She made a big splash last year with her debut, Start to Move, on which her silky voice glided through the funky, fluid grooves of her tight trio. Broken-beat, soul and new-school jazz fans could all find a foothold. The disc was nominated for a Juno (losing out to the unstoppable Diana Krall), and was voted No. 3 jazz album of the year by fans of tastemaking British DJ Gilles Peterson's influential BBC radio show. This collection of remixes and B-sides finds her songs intuitively reworked with inspired electronic touches.
T'CHA DUNLEVY

Elizabeth Shepherd Trio perform a free show tonight at 8 on the Alcan Stage.

Jazz fest: the facts

The Montreal International Jazz Festival wraps up today. Admission to outdoor shows is free. For more info, call 514-871-1881 or go to www.montrealjazzfest.com.

BUILDING A BRIDGE FROM LOUISIANA TO FRANCE

LIAM MALONEY THE GAZETTE
Cajun artist Zachary Richard (left) performs with France's Francis Cabrel at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier of Place des Arts Friday night.

REVIEWS

Vic Vogel paints pop-rock collaboration in bold strokes

JUAN RODRIGUEZ
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

It wouldn't be Montreal's jazz festival if local big-band legend Vic Vogel wasn't on the scene, once again last night in a packed Théâtre Maisonneuve, in a format larded with big-sounding arrangements and oratorical crooning.

The idea was to present local pop-rock stars Martin Deschamps, Bruno Pelletier and Michel Pagliaro singing jazz-oriented fare to Vogel's pumped-up charts. The result was what you'd expect of this one-off affair: over-the-top rather than nuance-filled.

Vogel's big-band blare was straight out of '50s film noir, sledgehammer heavy and big-city bold, drenched in the blues of rain-soaked nights. Over the din, Vogel was only occasionally heard pounding out random riffs, but the silver-haired local jazz legend made his presence felt with fulsome arm-waving in unison with the hysterical arrangements.

The diminutive Deschamps started out with Mack the Knife, in a peerless imitation of Louis Armstrong, then tackled Cab Calloway's Minnie the Moocher while conjuring Joe Cocker. He made way for Pelletier, who traipsed through Nature Boy (Nat Cole) and Roxanne (the Police) like a Vegas lounge lizard on acid. (Pagliaro had yet to appear when deadline called.)

Openers were supplied by Quebec blues king Bob Harrisson, a big Mack truck of a man celebrating his 50th year in show business, including previous collaborations with Vogel. After growling his way through Sweet Home Chicago, the former Offenbach guitarist-singer rendered one of the group's trademark tragic hits, Ayoye, in a gravel voice that conveyed echoes of Howlin' Wolf channelled through Robert Plant bombast.

Chet Doxas is a master tenor saxophonist ahead of his time

ADAM KINNER
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Saxophonist Chet Doxas may be the most exciting player Montreal has produced in the past few years. He's signed to Justin Time records. His debut record, Sidewalk Etiquette, is speaking well for him – and all this when he's only in his mid-20s. For anyone skeptical of the Montrealer, his quartet concert at the Gesù last night should dispel any doubts that Doxas has what it takes to make an indelible mark on the modern jazz scene.

A powerful tenorman, he proved his mettle twice over at the short concert. He mentioned multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Giuffre and the recently deceased tenor player Michael Brecker as major influences, although his motivic, understated but adventurous improvising rings more of Warne Marsh and his successor Mark Turner. That's not to say he can't turn on Brecker's aggressive, edgy sound when he wants to. Indeed, it's hard to pigeonhole a player with such a broad palette.

It takes a smart musician to keep such good company, too. The rhythm section provided intense and sympathetic support for their leader. Pianist John Roney's playing varied from cerebral and muted on Doxas's Unsung to a playful, modern stride style on the encore, Nouveau Brit. Zack Lober's tuneful yet rhythmic bass playing is perfect for Doxas's complex, always shifting compositions. And his solo bass introduction to Doxas's Sideshow was inspired and intensely melodic.

Of the three sidemen, however, Jim Doxas stands out. A truly inventive young drummer, his nearly telepathic accompaniment for his brother's improvising is a rare treat. It's obvious the two have spent a decade improvising together.

Anyone used to seeing Doxas at the Plateau spot Bistro Duluth would be happy with the quick progress he has made. A bigger venue and a chance at international recognition didn't snub the searching and adventurous playing he's known for. No easy feat for a 27-year-old.

NOTES FROM THE FEST

Standing in for Metallica: Dolores O'Riordan

Friday

It's not a good sign when three high-ranking jazz fest staffers intercept you on the street en route to a show saying, "Don't go!" Then they give the thumbs-down sign and pronounce, "It's too loud!" while shaking their heads. They were right. The sound at **Dolores O'Riordan's** concert at Metropolis was offensive. It was beyond deafening – it was earsplitting. The former singer for the Cranberries did a fine job of belting out the tunes as she marched about the stage like a tiny toy soldier clad in red stripes. The little Irish spitfire was as sharp as the points on the Celtic cross tattoo on her right shoulder, but it's hard to enjoy a show when your ears are bleeding.
NATASHA AIMÉE HALL

LIAM MALONEY THE GAZETTE
O'Riordan: earplugs required.

She's no diva, and yet she is. **Esperanza Spalding** was plagued with sound problems at her outdoor show, but she took it in stride. Sound is practically never an issue at the jazz fest, but when it is, displeasure can usually be seen clearly on the face of the performer. Spalding just kept smiling. The young beauty is a glorious bassist and vocalist, so utterly engaging and watchable. Her crazy hairdo (think Slash from Guns N' Roses), beguiling voice (think Billie Holiday and Macy Gray) and stunning scat skills make her a diva in the very best sense of the term.
NATASHA AIMÉE HALL

With a click of his tongue and a strum of his guitar, **Lionel Loueke** silenced and enthralled the crowd at his free outdoor show. A strange, guttural sound escaped his lips and there was an awkward moment when the audience seemed to wonder what the heck he was doing. Then the beat kicked in. The three-piece outfit of guitar, drums and upright bass, which came off as a tad too cerebral at first, let loose and had fun. A tap on a pedal and Loueke's singular, sweet voice became a chorus. Such curious and spellbinding music this man makes.
NATASHA AIMÉE HALL

He has an illustrious name to live up to, but as we know from his CDs, **Ravi Coltrane** – son of John and Alice Coltrane – is a formidable tenor sax player. We caught the first half of his sold-out show at the Spectrum; he offered impressive tunes in hard-bop mode, with lengthy improvisations. The way the band built up around Monk's Mysterioso was noteworthy. Coltrane's tone was full, the energy and ideas flowed, and the warm festival crowd followed every note, with many fans bopping their heads to keep time with the excellent band: **Luis Perdomo** (piano), **Drew Gress** (bass) and **E.J. Strickland** (drums). We hope he'll be back next year.
IRWIN BLOCK

Note to all musicians everywhere: When the announcer asks the crowd for a jazz-festival welcome, take care to enter before the applause dies down.

The Robert Glasper Trio did eventually saunter onto the stage of the Gesù and performed with steady refinement. The 27-year-old pianist (and Blue Note artist) has a light touch and fluent technique. He could weave a fine fantasy from a gospel tune, and his partners (bassist **Vicente Archer** and particularly drummer **Chris Dave**) were no less adept as doodlers. Toward the end of some of the longer numbers, the listener was apt to ask: Is this art or is it craft? Still, anyone with a taste for sophistication can be happy for Glasper's emergence.

Let it be noted that the arrangement of Lonnie's Lament performed Monday in the same setting as part of the stunning John Coltrane tribute was by alto player Rémi Bolduc - not Chet Doxas, as I reported Tuesday.
ARTHUR KAPTAINIS

The throng of young fans in hip-hop garb outside Club Soda just past midnight was the first clue something was up. The sense of anticipation in the packed room was the second. When Malian-Parisian Blue Note artist **Oxmo Puccino** took the stage with his four-piece band **the Jazzbastards,** the crowd went nuts. Singing every word, all night, hands in the air. He sounded like Notorious B.I.G. rhyming en français, over dramatic acid-jazz tracks. He came back for two encores, and the audience was still calling for more. Conclusions: Only in Paris could a hard-rhyming rapper be so artistically osé; and the jazz fest nailed this bit of programming square on the head. For more, see www.oxmo.net.
T'CHA DUNLEVY

Yesterday

Swiss-born Montreal resident **Félix Stüssi** and his combo **Give Me Five** have won this year's General Motors Grand Jazz Award. The prize entitles them to 50 hours of recording time at Karisma Studio, a record distribution deal with Justin Time and a slot at next year's festival. Yesterday the group (including saxophonists **Bruno Lamarche** and **Alex Côté,** bassist **Clinton Ryder** and drummer **Isaiah Ceccarelli**) was scheduled to play outdoors at 6 p.m. and later open the Oliver Jones-Susie Arioli show at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier. Jurors also made special mention of North Vancouver bassist **Brandi Disterheft.**

Meanwhile, the Galaxie Rising Star Award went to **Marianne Trudel** for her composition Sur la route. In addition to a $5,000 grant, Trudel will also get exposure for her music on the Galaxie channels.
JUAN RODRIGUEZ

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